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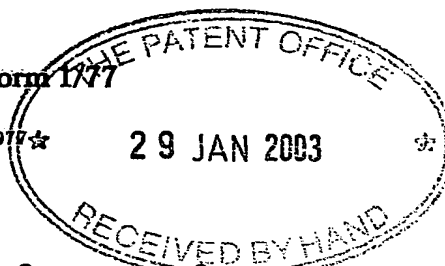
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1. Your reference

P17271GB-NHF/SJP/jw

30JAN03 E780936-5 D00389
PC1/7700 0.00-0302088.0

2. Patent application number

(The Patent Office will fill in this part)

29 JAN 2003

0302088.0

3. Full name, address and postcode of the or of each applicant (underline all surnames)

Autoliv Development AB
Patent Department
S-447 83 VARGARDA
Sweden

Patents ADP number (if you know it)

If the applicant is a corporate body, give the country/state of its incorporation

Sweden

853541001

4. Title of the invention

"IMPROVEMENTS IN OR RELATING TO AN AIR-BAG ARRANGEMENT"

5. Name of your agent (if you have one)

Forrester Ketley & Co.

"Address for service" in the United Kingdom to which all correspondence should be sent (including the postcode)

Forrester House
52 Bounds Green Road
London
N11 2EY

Patents ADP number (if you know it)

133001

6. If you are declaring priority from one or more earlier patent applications, give the country and the date of filing of the or of each of these earlier applications and (if you know it) the or each application number

Country

Priority application number
(if you know it)

Date of filing
(day / month / year)

7. If this application is divided or otherwise derived from an earlier UK application, give the number and the filing date of the earlier application

Number of earlier application

Date of filing
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8. Is a statement of inventorship and of right to grant of a patent required in support of this request? (Answer 'Yes' if:

- a) any applicant named in part 3 is not an inventor, or
 - b) there is an inventor who is not named as an applicant, or
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- See note (d))

Yes

Patents Form 1/77

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Continuation sheets of this form

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Description

9

Claim(s)

2

Abstract

1

Drawing(s)

3

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Priority documents

Translations of priority documents

Statement of inventorship and right to grant of a patent (*Patents Form 7/77*)

Three

Request for preliminary examination and search (*Patents Form 9/77*)

One

Request for substantive examination (*Patents Form 10/77*)

Any other documents
(please specify)

11.

I/We request the grant of a patent on the basis of this application.

Signature
Forrester Ketley & Co.
Forrester Ketley & Co.

Date
28 January, 2003

12. Name and daytime telephone number of person to contact in the United Kingdom

Simon J. PARRY
(020) 8889 6622

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PATENTS ACT 1977

P17271GB - NHF/ns

5 DESCRIPTION OF INVENTION

**“IMPROVEMENTS IN OR RELATING TO AN AIR-BAG
ARRANGEMENT”**

10

THE PRESENT INVENTION relates to an air-bag arrangement, and more particularly relates to an air-bag arrangement for use in a motor vehicle in the form of a so-called “inflatable curtain”.

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An inflatable curtain is an air-bag or inflatable element which is initially mounted in the roof of a motor vehicle adjacent the side windows of the vehicle. In the event of a specific type of accident, such as, for example, a side impact, the inflatable element inflates, thus extending down to a cover the windows in the manner of a curtain. Typically the opposed ends of the lower edge of the inflatable element are secured to mounting points, optionally with the use of straps, and, as the inflatable element inflates, so the length of the lower edge of the inflatable element reduces, thus creating a line of tension extending between the two anchoring points. Thus the inflatable element is held securely in position, minimising the risk of any part of an occupant emerging through a window during the accident.

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It has been proposed to provide certain regions of the inflatable element which do not actually inflate in order to minimise the quantity of gas needed to

inflate the inflatable element, and also to ensure that the inflatable element can be inflated in the relatively brief period of time that is typically available in a side impact situation.

5 While many designs of inflatable curtain have been produced in recent years for use in different types of motor vehicle. It has been found, especially in connection with inflatable elements designed for use in vehicles having a substantial length, such as vehicles of "MPV" type, where the inflatable element can extend from an "A"-Post to a "D"-Post that, excessive tension can
10 occur in parts of the inflatable curtain, thus distorting the inflatable curtain in an undesirable manner.

 The present invention seeks to provide an improved air-bag arrangement.

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 According to this invention there is provided an air-bag in the form of a one-piece woven inflatable curtain, the inflatable curtain defining at least two spaced-apart inflatable regions and an uninflatable region, the uninflatable region incorporating an expansion panel, the expansion panel having two outer
20 fabric layers, the outer fabric layers being interconnected by an intermediate or third layer extending from a first region where it merges with a first of the two outer layers to a second region where it merges with the second of the two outer layers, there being a slit line formed in the first layer between the first region and an adjacent edge of the expansion panel, and there being a further slit line
25 provided in the second layer between the second region and the other edge of the expansion panel.

 Preferably there is a second intermediate or third layer extending between the first and second layers of fabric, the second intermediate or third

layer extending from a point between the further slit line and the said other edge of the expansion panel and a part of the first layer of fabric closer to the said other edge of the panel, there being a further slit line formed in the first layer of fabric between the said part and the said other edge of the panel.

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Conveniently wherein the slit line is in the form of an actual slit.

Alternatively the slit line is in the form of a perforated line of slits.

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Alternatively wherein the slit line is in the form of a line formed with weak threads configured to rupture when a predetermined tension is applied to them.

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Preferably, the uninflatable region is located between and separates two said spaced apart inflatable regions.

20

Alternatively, the uninflatable region is located between one of said inflatable regions and part of the air-bag configured for connection to an anchoring point.

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In order that the invention may be more readily understood, and so that further features thereof may be appreciated, the invention will now be described, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

FIGURE 1 is a diagrammatic plan view of an air-bag in the form of an inflatable curtain in accordance with the invention;

FIGURE 3 is a diagrammatic sectional view through part of Figure 2 in the first condition of the air-bag;

5 FIGURE 4 is a diagrammatic sectional view corresponding to Figure 3 in the second condition of the air-bag;

FIGURE 5 is a diagrammatic sectional view of part of an alternative embodiment of the invention in the first condition;

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FIGURE 6 is a diagrammatic sectional view corresponding to Figure 5 illustrating the air-bag of Figure 5 in an alternative condition; and

15 FIGURE 7 is a diagrammatic view of the end of an alternative air-bag configuration of the present invention.

Referring initially to Figure 1 of the accompanying drawings, an air-bag 1 in the form of an inflatable curtain is illustrated. The air-bag is of generally rectangular form and is fabricated using a one piece weaving process.

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The upper edge of the air-bag is provided with a plurality of mounting lugs 2 configured to co-operate with mounting points provided in a motor vehicle. The upper edge of the air-bag is also provided with a protruding gas inlet neck 3, formed by two super-imposed layers of fabric, bounded by appropriate seams. The neck 3 may receive a gas generator or inflator or may
25 be connected to a source of gas. The neck 3 communicates with a transversely extending gas flow duct 4 which extends across the entire width of the air-bag, adjacent the upper edge. The gas duct 4 is effectively defined by two super-imposed layers of fabric. The gas duct 4 communicates with a first inflatable

region 5 divided into plurality of discrete cells 6 by means of vertical seams 7 which interconnect regions of the two adjacent layers of fabric. The gas flow duct 4 also extends to a second inflatable region 8, where again seams 9 interconnect the two layers of fabric. Around the periphery of the inflatable regions 5 and 8 the fabric is woven as a single layer 10, using the one piece weaving process.

At one end of the air-bag a mounting strap 11 is provided which may, for example, be configured to extend to an anchoring point provided on the A post of the vehicle. At the other end of the air-bag two mounting lugs 12, 13 are provided which can be connected to anchoring points provided, for example, on the C post of the vehicle, either directly or by means of a strap.

Between the two inflatable regions 5 and 8 there is an uninflatable region 14, formed partly of a single layer of fabric, which is provided with an expansion panel 15. The expansion panel 15 is shown more clearly in Figures 2 and 3.

The expansion panel 15 comprises a region, of inverted "U" shape, in the form of a pocket defined between two layers of fabric 16, 17. Contained within the pocket are two separate regions 18, 19 of an intermediate or third layer of fabric, which each extend from the first layer or front layer of fabric 16 towards the second layer or rear layer of fabric 17 of the panel 15. As can be appreciated from Figure 3, the portions 18 and 19 of the third layer extend from parts of the front layer 16 which are very close to the edges of the panel pocket, where the single layer of fabric 14 abuts the panel 15, towards the central part of the rear layer 17.

A first slit line 20 is provided in the rear layer 17 at a point between the regions where the two portions 18 and 19 of the third layer merge with the rear layer 17. Similar slit lines 21, 22 are provided in the layer 16 at points between where the parts 18 and 19 of the third layer merge with the front layer 16 and the adjacent parts of the periphery of the panel 15, where the single layer of fabric 14 abuts the panel 15.

The slit lines may be actual slits or, alternatively, may be slit lines of such a form that a slit will appear if a tension or force in excess of the predetermined threshold is applied. Thus the slit lines may be "perforated" lines, formed of a plurality of regions of actual "slit" separated by smaller regions of fabric or, alternatively, may be formed from fabric woven in such a way that only very weak fibres extend across the slit line, with the intention that the weak fibres will break when a force is applied to the fibres in excess of a predetermined threshold.

It is to be appreciated that Figure 3 shows the layers of fabric in a "expanded" state which they would not occupy. The three layers of fabric would be co-planar and in contact with each other.

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The pocket 15 may be formed having an open lower edge, to facilitate formation of the slits. The slits may thus be cut in the layers of fabric, starting at the lower edge. If this manufacturing technique is utilised the fabric may be woven to mark a slit line, to facilitate the slitting process, and some sort of stitching or weaving may be used to mark the intended position of the uppermost end of each slit line. A "tear" seam 23 may be provided extending parallel with the lowermost edge of the inflatable curtain across the lowermost part of the expansion panel, in order to retain the various layers of fabric

constituting the expansion panel in the desired position until the expansion panel is to perform its desired function.

If an excessive tension is applied to the expansion panel described above it is to be understood that the slit lines 20, 21, 22 will open to form open-slits. This will enable the two regions 14 of single layer fabric on opposite sides of the panel 15 to move apart, as the opening of the slit 20 will permit the regions 18 and 19 of the third intermediate layer of fabric to move away from each other, and the opening of the slits 21 and 22 in the front layer of the fabric 16 will facilitate this movement. Thus the components of the expansion panel will be able to move to have the position shown schematically in Figure 4, with the slit lines being fully open to form effective slits, as shown. Consequently, the excessive tension occurring in the inflatable curtain may be relieved.

Whilst Figures 1 to 4 have illustrated an embodiment in which there are two regions of the intermediate third layer of fabric within the expansion panel, Figure 5 illustrates, schematically, a rather simpler embodiment in which a single region 18 of a third layer extends between the front layer of fabric 16 and the rear layer of fabric 17 in a modified form of expansion panel.

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The intermediate third layer 18 extends from part of the front layer 16 which is relatively close to the surrounding single layer of fabric 14 and a slit line 22 is provided in the front layer 16 between the point where the intermediate third layer 18 merges with the front layer 16 and the adjacent single surrounding layer 14. Similarly the intermediate third layer 18 merges with the rear edge 17 at a point spaced not very far from the single layer 14 on the other side of the panel 15. A slit line 20 is provided in the rear layer between the point at which the intermediate or third layer 18 merges with the

rear layer 17 and the adjacent surrounding single layer of fabric 14 on that side of the panel.

It is to be appreciated that when a substantial tension is applied to the slit
5 lines 20 and 22, the slits will appear and the expansion panel may expand, as illustrated in Figure 6, again relieving any excessive tension in the inflatable curtain.

Whilst the invention has been described above with particular reference
10 to an arrangement in which the uninflatable region 14 and its associated expansion panel 15 is located between two separated inflatable regions 5, 8, it should be appreciated that the uninflatable region and its associated expansion panel 15 could be located elsewhere on the air-bag arrangement. Such an alternative configuration is illustrated schematically in Figure 7 which shows
15 one end of an air-bag 1 in the form of an inflatable curtain. This arrangement comprises a single mounting lug 12 to permit connection to anchoring points providing, for example, on the C-post of the motor vehicle, either directly or by means of a strap. In this arrangement, the uninflatable region 14 and its associated expansion panel 15 is located between the rearmost inflatable region
20 5 and the mounting lug 12, and hence permits the end region of the inflatable curtain 1 to expand, in the same manner as described above in more detail, if excessive tension is applied to the expansion panel 15.

In the present specification "comprises" means "includes or consists of"
25 and "comprising" means "including or consisting of".

The features disclosed in the foregoing description, or the following claims, or the accompanying drawings, expressed in their specific forms or in terms of a means for performing the disclosed function, or a method or process

for attaining the disclosed result, as appropriate, may, separately, or in any combination of such features, be utilised for realising the invention in diverse forms thereof.

CLAIMS:

- 5 1. An airbag in the form of a one-piece woven inflatable curtain, the inflatable curtain defining at least two spaced-apart inflatable regions and an uninflatable region, the uninflatable region incorporating an expansion panel, the expansion panel having two outer fabric layers, the outer fabric layers being interconnected by an intermediate or third layer extending from a first region
10 where it merges with a first of the two outer layers to a second region where it merges with the second of the two outer layers, there being a slit line formed in the first layer between the first region and an adjacent edge of the expansion panel, and there being a further slit line provided in the second layer between the second region and the other edge of the expansion panel.
- 15 2. An air-bag according to Claim 1 wherein there is a second intermediate or third layer extending between the first and second layers of fabric, the second intermediate or third layer extending from a point between the further slit line and the said other edge of the expansion panel and a part of the first
20 layer of fabric closer to the said other edge of the panel, there being a further slit line formed in the first layer of fabric between the said part and the said other edge of the panel.
- 25 3. An air-bag according to any one of the preceding Claims wherein the slit line is in the form of an actual slit.
4. An air-bag according to Claims 1 or 2 wherein the slit line is in the form of a perforated line of slits.

5. An air-bag according to Claims 1 or 2 wherein the slit line is in the form of a line formed with weak threads configured to rupture when a predetermined tension is applied to them.

5

6. An air-bag according to any one of the preceding Claims wherein the expansion panel is traversed by at least one tear seam.

7. An air-bag according to any one of the preceding Claims, wherein the uninflatable region is located between and separates two said spaced apart inflatable regions.

8. An air-bag according to any one of Claims 1 to 6, wherein said uninflatable region is located between one of said inflatable regions and part of the air-bag configured for connection to an anchoring point.

9. An air-bag substantially as herein described with reference to and as shown in the accompanying drawings.

10. Any novel feature or combination of features disclosed herein.

ABSTRACT:

5 **“IMPROVEMENTS IN OR RELATING TO AN AIR-BAG
ARRANGEMENT”**

10 A one-piece woven air-bag in the form of an inflatable curtain (1) has two
inflatable regions (5, 8) separated by an uninflatable region (14) which
incorporates an expansion panel (15) to relieve excessive tension that may arise
within the inflatable curtain. The expansion panel comprises a region where
there are two outer layers of fabric (16, 17) interconnected by an intermediate
or third layer (18, 19) extending from the first layer (16) to the second layer
15 (17). Slit lines (20, 21, 22) are provided in the outer layers so that the
expansion panel may expand when subjected to tension.

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Fig. 1

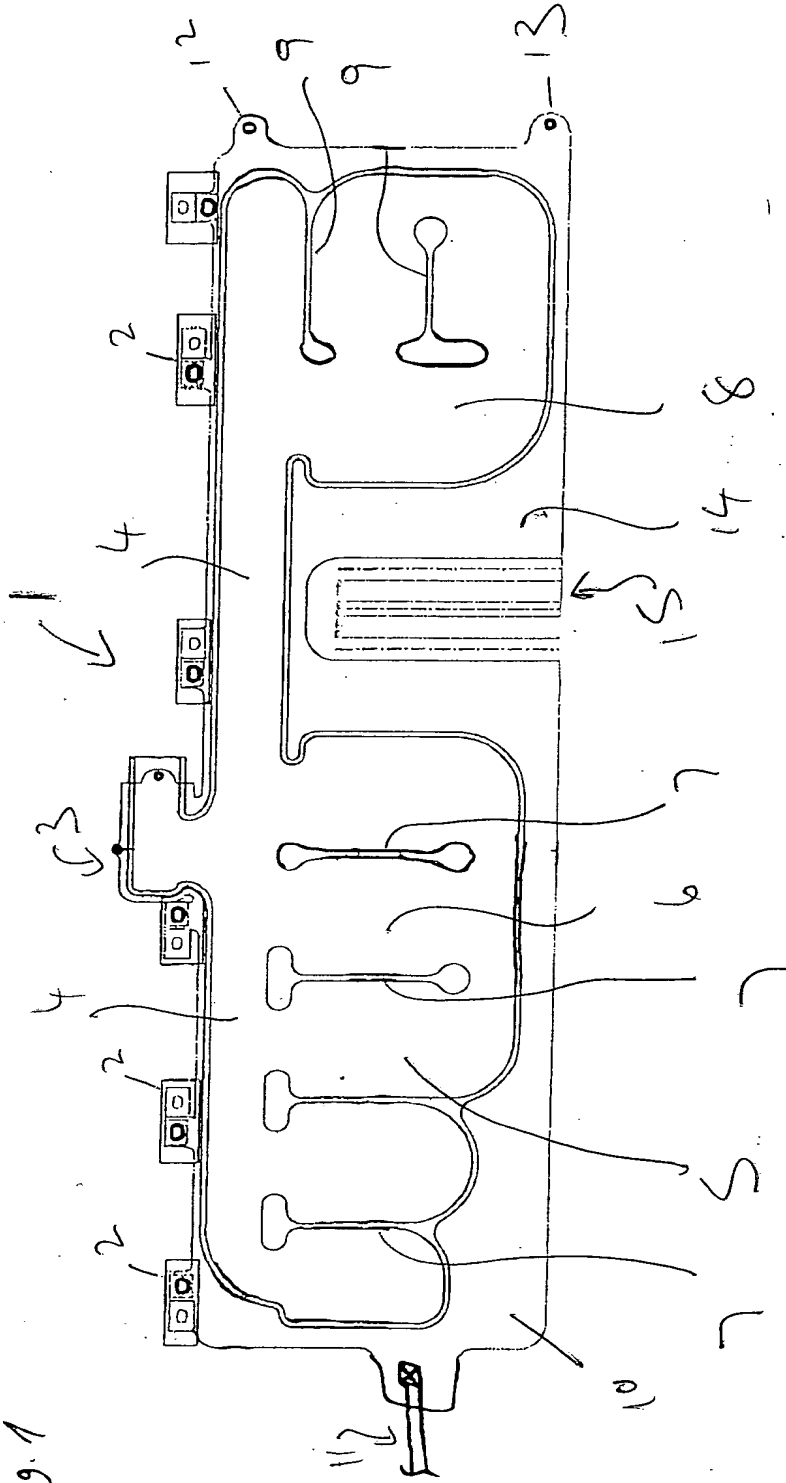


Fig. 2

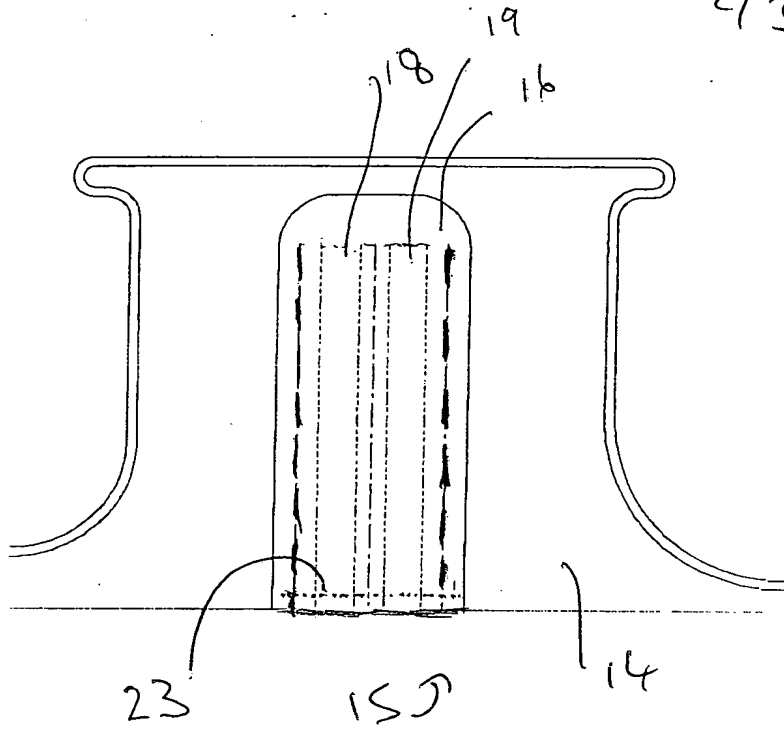


Fig. 3

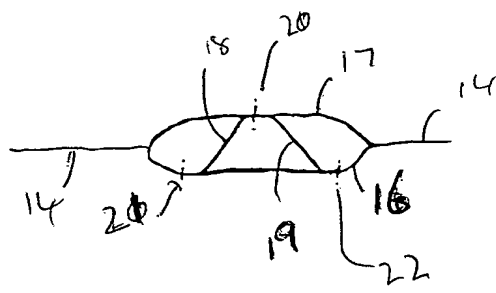


Fig. 4

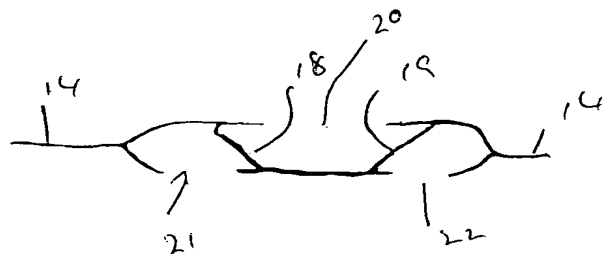


Fig. 5

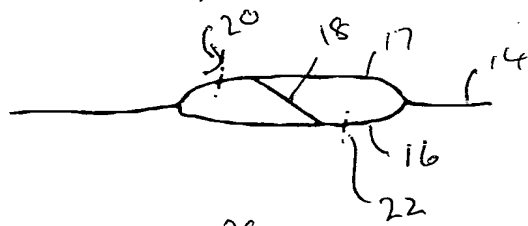
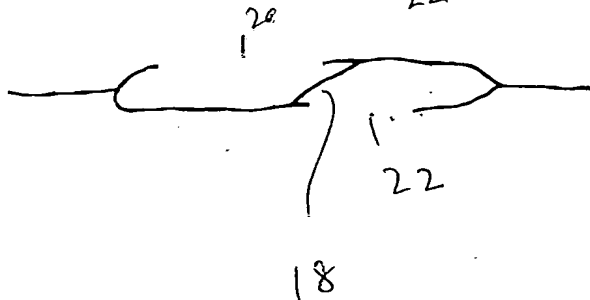


Fig. 6



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Fig. 7

